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Questions and Answers on Mormonism

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Questions and Answers on Mormonism.

I.

Historical Points.

QUES.—Who are the Mormons?

ANS.—They are the people who have accepted the religion which was taught by Joseph Smith.

Q.—When and where was Joseph Smith born?

A.—At Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, on the 23d day of December, 1805.

Q.—Where did he subsequently live?

A.—He removed with his parents to Palmyra, N. Y., when he was but ten years of age.

Q.—What was the character of his parents?

A.—They were ignorant, superstitious, intemperate, untruthful and dishonest.

Q.—What occurred in 1819 to influence his life?

A.—When Joseph was fourteen years of age, there was an exciting religious revival in the vicinity of Palmyra, and young Joseph Smith became very much wrought up over the subject of religion.

Q.—What did he say of himself?

A.—He said that he went to a neighboring woods to pray, and that he asked God which church he ought to join.

Q.—What answer did he claim to receive?

A.—He said that God appeared to him and told him that all the "sects" were wrong, and that he should join none of them.

Q.—What further claim did he make?

A.—He affirmed that in 1823 the Angel Moroni (a fictitious name) appeared to him and told him that God had chosen him to do a great work as His prophet, and that there were certain records inscribed upon golden plates which were buried in the hill Cumorah, near Palmyra, N. Y.

Q.—What did he assert concerning the alleged records?

A.—Joseph Smith represented that the golden plates contained the records of the Jaredites, the original inhabitants of America, and the records of the Nephites and Lamanites, who came after, the latter having been the progenitors of our Indian races.

Q.—What else did he claim to have found by following the instructions of this fictitious angel?

A.—Two transparent stones set in silver, which he represented to be the ancient Urim and Thummim, through which he was able to read the writing upon the plates and to translate it into the English language.

Q.—What did he claim concerning these records?

A.—He claimed that he received them from Moroni in the year 1827: that he translated so much of them as the angel instructed; that he did this by means of the Urim and Thummim, and then he returned the golden plates to the Angel Moroni.

Q.—How did he account for the origin of the alleged records?

A.—He represented that they were an abridged record prepared by Mormon, an ancient prophet, who had handed them down to his son Moroni, who in 420 A.D. buried them in the hill where they were found by Joseph at the direction of this same Moroni, who had in the meantime become an angel of God.

Q.—Is there any truth in Joseph Smith's claim

that he found such records upon golden plates, or that he received any such revelations concerning them?

A.—It is all pure fabrication to deceive people.

Q.—How were Joseph Smith and his claim received at the time?

A.—Those who knew him did not believe him, because his own personal career up to that time had been one of indolence, untruthfulness and unscrupulous dishonesty. In his fortune-telling and treasure digging he had generally managed to get his associates to do the work while he did the prophesying. His own bad record, together with the absurdity of his claims, made it impossible for him to gain followers among those who knew him, except the few who, with himself, were concerned in the perpetration of the fraud.

II.

The Book of Mormon.

Q.—What was done with the alleged translation from the golden plates?

A.—It was published and called the "Book of Mormon." The first edition was copyrighted, and the name of Joseph Smith appeared as author and proprietor.

Q.—What is the true origin of the Book of Mormon?

A.—Solomon Spaulding, who had made a failure of his attempt to be a minister of the Gospel, had written a story of ancient America in the form of a novel, not intending to deceive any one, but merely for his own recreation and with the hope of having it published and making some money out of it as a work of fiction; but it was so devoid of literary merit that he could not find a publisher. This manuscript Joseph Smith and

Sidney Rigdon found, and appropriated to their use, changing it to suit their own religious views.

Q.—What was the original motive in publishing this so-called Book of Mormon?

A.—The original motive seems to have been merely to publish it as a money-making scheme, but as such it proved to be a failure so far as the sale of books was concerned. However, some credulous people were found who were not acquainted with Smith's character, and who were ready to believe that the Book of Mormon was history. This suggested a new way of making money, namely, by duping people to become religious followers, pay tithes, etc. After Joseph Smith found that he could use the Book of Mormon as a sacred book upon which to base a religion and gain followers who would support him, he invented the story of the angel, the golden plates and the Urim and Thummim, in order to account for the origin of the book as divine.

Q.—How do the Mormons of to-day look upon the Book of Mormon?

A.—They regard it as superior to the Bible, because they believe it is a later work, that it was translated by inspiration and that it is thus free from the errors of transcribers and fallible translators.

Q.—What other peculiar books do the Mormons hold to be sacred Scripture?

A.—They believe in the "Pearl of Great Price," alleged to be an ancient record which dates back to the days of Abraham, and which Joseph Smith also claimed to have translated into the English language. They believe also in the "Doctrine and Covenants" as a series of special revelations from God through Joseph Smith for the guidance of the people in this dispensation. They regard the last of these as more binding upon them than any or all of the older revelations, because they were

given especially to them, while the older revelations were especially intended for the people of other days.

III.

The Mormon Church.

Q.—What class of Revelations do the Mormons consider to be more binding upon them than even the "Doctrine and Covenants?"

A.—They believe that the President of the Mormon Church is the "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator" of the Church throughout the world; that he is, in fact, the very "mouthpiece of God;" that he gets such revelations from God from day to day as the people of this age need for their guidance; that his words, together with the words of the other members of the Mormon priesthood, constitute the "living oracles" of God for the government of man in all things, "temporal as well as spiritual," and they believe that these so-called "living oracles" are of far more importance to the people of this generation than all written revelations combined.

Q.—When was the Mormon Church organized?

A.—On April 6, 1830. It is called the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

Q.—What is the technical name of the people who constitute the church?

A.—They are called "Latter Day Saints," though usually they call themselves Mormons.

Q.—When are they most careful *not* to call themselves Mormons?

A.—When on a mission, the elders as a rule do not so designate themselves, wishing to escape the odium which is associated with the name Mormon, because of the vile doctrines and practices of the people of that name.

IV.

Political Power.

Q.—What is the estimated number of Mormons?

A.—About three hundred thousand in the United States. There are also large settlements of Mormons in Canada and Mexico.

Q.—What is the present rate of increase in the Mormon Church?

A.—Their figures show a net increase of between sixty and sixty-five thousand during 1897—a ratio of over thirty per cent. The same ratio of increase would give them a membership of about 12,500,000 in fifteen years, or enough to distribute over 70,000 voters into every State in this Union, provided they, in the meantime, secure woman suffrage, as they aim to do whenever they have the power. This would give them the balance of political power in nearly every State in this country.

Q.—In what part of the country is their stronghold?

A.—In the Rocky Mountain region, especially in Utah, where they have absolute political control. In Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and Nevada they hold the balance of political power, as well as in the territories of Arizona and New Mexico.

Q.—Of what advantage is this political strength?

A.—It not only gives them great influence in the government of those States, but they gain also undue influence in the counsels of the government at Washington.

Q.—What is their evident aim?

A.—It has been the ambition as well as the teaching of the Mormons from the beginning that it is the mission of their Church to control first this continent and ultimately to rule the whole world.

Q.—What political authority is claimed by the Mormon priesthood?

A.—It is claimed and taught that the Mormon priesthood has "*the power and right to give laws and commandments to individuals, churches, rulers, nations, and the world; to appoint, ordain, and establish constitutions and kingdoms; to appoint kings, presidents, governors or judges, and to ordain or anoint them to their several holy callings, also to instruct, warn, or reprove them by the word of the Lord;*" i. e., the word as revealed to the Mormon priesthood. (See Pratt's Key to Theology, pages 68 and 69.)

Q.—What do they teach concerning other governments?

A.—They teach that "*All merely human religions or political institutions, all republics, states, kingdoms, empires, must be dissolved,*" in order to make way for the "*universal, eternal government of the Saints of the Most High*" (i. e., the Mormons.

Q.—What are some of the advantages which the Mormons have already secured by their political influence?

A.—They have secured Statehood for Utah, which is virtually admitting the Mormon Church as a State of the Union; they have secured the appointment of prominent polygamists to office by the President of the United States; in July, 1898, they secured the appointment of so bigoted a Mormon as Elias S. Kimball as Chaplain in the Army, and lastly they elected Brigham H. Roberts, an avowed polygamist, as Representative to the LVI. Congress.

Q.—What are they doing to extend their political power and to hasten the day when they shall have "universal dominion"?

A.—They are now sending missionaries to all parts of the United States to make "converts."

They had about 2,000 of these missionaries in the field during the years 1897 and 1898, and they are constantly increasing the number.

V.

Mormon Methods.

Q.—What methods do they use to secure "converts"?

A.—They keep back the most objectionable part of their religious views until the new "converts" are in the Church; they misrepresent the facts in regard to the real situation in Utah, and use the Bible in their mission fields in such a way as to give the impression that it alone is the foundation of their religious belief; they introduce their "later revelations," their views of God, polygamy, etc., after the new "converts" have become identified with them.

Q.—What agencies aid in deceiving the people of the East as to the real Mormon situation?

A.—The petty politicians, a large part of the secular press, and also many real estate speculators in Salt Lake City, who misrepresent the facts in order to induce victims to come to Mormondom and buy real estate.

VI.

Mormon Doctrines.

Q.—What are some of the characteristic doctrines of Mormonism?

A.—The Mormons teach that God is an "exalted man" and polygamist; that there are many gods; that the men of to-day may become gods by living up to the Mormon "principles," including polygamy. They believe in baptism for the dead "by proxy" for the salvation of their rela-

tives who died without the faith; that their church is the only true church, and that there is no salvation for one who apostatizes from Mormonism except to shed his blood in order that he may be saved in the next world. This is what is known as "the doctrine of blood-atonement."

They believe that Christ was a man and became God by practicing polygamy; that sin is necessary to development and progress, and therefore Adam, who was God the Father manifest in the flesh, "sinned that man might be;" that Christ, "our Elder Brother," the son of the Adam-god by natural generation, paid the penalty for original sin, but that for our own sins we must "work out our own salvation" by being baptized into the Mormon Church, obeying the priesthood, and paying tithes to the Mormon Church.

Q.—Do the Mormons teach and practice polygamy to-day?

A.—Yes; they both teach and practice this anti-American and anti-Christian doctrine all through Utah, and wherever they are organized in Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico; and they teach it, too, in their Eastern mission fields whenever they find people who are "prepared to receive" such "higher doctrines."

Q.—What statement has recently been made by Lorenzo Snow, the new President of the Mormon Church?

A.—He stated that the Mormon Church had not practiced polygamy since 1890, when President Woodruff issued his so-called "manifesto" pretending to "suspend" the practice of polygamy.

Q.—What proves the falsity of President Snow's words?

A.—It has been conclusively shown that there have been over 1,000 polygamous children born

in Utah during the past two years, to say nothing of the large number of which nothing is known. It must be remembered, however, that President Snow's denial was only intended for the benefit of such American citizens as cannot endorse polygamy, because such people are regarded as "dogs" or "swine" and "not worthy" to know what is going on in the Mormon harem.

If you read Mormon Doctrine and Covenants, sections 10 and 42, you will there learn that the Mormons are commanded by "direct revelation" to lie about all their teachings to all people who are not Mormons. The reason given for such falsehoods is in these words: "*For it is not meet that the things which belong to the children of the kingdom should be given to them that are not worthy, or to dogs, or the pearls to be cast before swine.*"

Q.—What clause concerning polygamy did the Mormons insert in their State Constitution?

A.—In order to meet the demands of public sentiment in the East and to obtain Statehood, they adopted a clause forbidding the practice of polygamy. It was done with the expressed intention on the part of the Mormons that the said clause should never be enforced, and it has not been enforced in a single instance since Statehood.

VII.

Historical Summary.

Q.—Give a brief history of the movements of the Mormon Church from its beginning until the present time.

A.—The Church was first organized at Manchester, Ontario County, N. Y., on April 6, 1830. In January, 1831, the members moved to Kirtland, Ohio, which was to be the New Jerusalem. They soon became involved in trouble with their neighbors, and were obliged to flee to Missouri. The troubles assuming the proportions of a civil war, they were obliged to flee to Illinois. Here

they prospered until 1844, when Joseph Smith was lynched, and the people were again compelled to flee from their homes. Brigham Young became President of the Church, and led the Mormons to the Rocky Mountain region. On July 24, 1847, they reached the place where Salt Lake City now stands.

Q.—From what cause did their troubles arise which made it necessary for them to flee beyond the borders of civilization?

A.—There were many minor causes, but the chief one was the fact that they were determined to practice polygamy and to ruie the people by their anti-American priesthood government.

Q.—Give some of the advantages of their location.

A.—The lands which they occupy are among the most fertile in all this country. Even when they first reached Salt Lake Valley they found an abundance of green pasturage for their cattle, and an abundant harvest followed the first sowing of seed. The mountains of Utah have untold mineral wealth; the climate is delightful and the most healthful. From a political standpoint they occupy a strategic and commanding position, where at the present time a minimum number of votes can have a maximum influence over legislation at Washington. The thoughtful observer cannot resist the conclusion that the people who can control that section of country are bound to have a great influence in shaping the destiny of our country.

VIII.

Attitude toward Mormons.

Q.—What should we, as American citizens, do to check the advancing power of Mormonism?

A.—If we would be true to our homes and our country, we must inform ourselves in regard to the character and methods of the dangerous foe to our American institutions, and we must arouse public sentiment so as to make it impolitic for the politicians and our National Government to make any more compromises with this religio-political monstrosity.

Q.—What is our duty as Christians towards those who have been duped into following after the false gods of Mormonism, and towards those who have been born under its sway and who know nothing about the pure religion of Jesus as taught in the Bible?

A.—If we would be true to the Saviour who died for them as well as for us, we must do all we can to save these people from their lost condition by presenting the Gospel in such a way as to enable them to understand it. Because of their horrible idea of God, Christ, man, sin, redemption, etc., it is impossible for those who have been born in Mormonism to understand the Gospel of Christ without much careful instruction, such as cannot be given in the ordinary preaching service. Experience has proved that *Christian training* is absolutely necessary for the evangelization of the Mormon people.

Q.—What special reason have we for urging mission work among the Mormons at the present time?

A.—The fact that the Mormons are sending thousands of missionaries here in the East ought to stimulate us to make a special effort to Christianize the Mormon people, since it is now evident to all well-informed people that their power in Utah must be broken, lest they Mormonize our own communities.

IX.

Presbyterian Mission Work among the Mormons.

Q.—When and where was mission work in Utah begun by the Presbyterian Church?

A.—In 1871, at Salt Lake City. The First Presbyterian Church of that place was organized by the Rev. Josiah Welch, the meetings being held in a stable loft.

Q.—When was mission school work begun among the Mormons?

A.—In 1874 two mission schools were opened, one at Mount Pleasant, Utah, under Dr. D. J. McMillan, and one at Salt Lake City, with Prof. J. M. Coyner as teacher. The care of these schools, together with that of all other mission schools, was assumed by the Woman's Board of Home Missions.

Q.—What is the present (1899) number of mission schools?

A.—There are 29 schools, with 66 teachers and about 2,000 pupils in these schools. Three of the schools are in Idaho. The others are in Utah.

Q.—Name some of the beneficial results of this mission school work among the Mormons.

A.—Several thousand children who would otherwise have grown up in dense ignorance have had Christian training in these schools. A fair percentage of these have become Christians, and many more of them have been so impressed with the religious instruction which they have received that they are seeking for more light and are thus growing out of Mormonism into Christianity. All of them are better citizens than they could have become without the mission school, and they are much better prepared to hear and understand the truth when preached to

them than they could have been if they had never been taught any other than the Mormon idea of God, Christ, man, sin, and redemption. Many of the mission school pupils have attended high schools and a few have gone to college. Some of them are to-day ministers of the Gospel; others are mission teachers, and many more are Sunday-school teachers. Nearly every trade and profession has in it useful men and women who received in the Utah mission schools their first desire or impulse to become true men and women. All these are helping to break down the tyrannical power of Mormonism, which enslaves both soul and body. Christian education has proved to be the God-ordained means of overcoming the evils of Mormonism and to make its devotees free men and free women in Christ Jesus.

Q.—Are more of these mission schools needed among the Mormon people?

A.—There are still over fifty towns in Mormondom, ranging from 500 to 2,000 in population, where the rising generation have no Christian instruction. In these Mormon towns the pretended public schools are Mormon sectarian schools under another name. The Mormon religion is more carefully taught than reading, writing, or any branch of education. Unless the mission school is planted, and the true Christian religion taught, the children and young people of these towns have no prospect of anything else than to grow up to be slaves to a wicked system and to swell the ranks of the Mormon missionaries who are overrunning our country to gain "converts" to the same degrading faith.

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